

oppressive under the administration of Herod the Great, a cruel tyrant. Near the close of the reign of Herod, Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, a village five six miles south of Jerusalem and one of the oldest towns in Palestine. Herod was cruel and ambitious, with an energetic character. At fifteen he was made governor of Galilee, and distinguished himself in a campaign against the brigands who infested the mountains. He was the first of the seven Herods who are spoken of in the Bible. He was king of Judea under Augustus Cæsar, Emperor of Rome. Herod died in the year of Rome 750, just before the passover, and, probably, a few months after Christ. The loathsome disease with which he died is hardly mentioned in history. Yet on a bed in a house of luxury which he had built under the palms of Jericho, he lay suffering, distorted by pain, surrounded by his wicked and scheming sons, and detested slaves. Thus was the wrath of God kindled upon the head of a wicked ruler.

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION.

J. M. BOWMAN.

How much joy and gladness finds vent and expression at this most happy time of the year, the Christmas time, the time that has gathered in its folds all of the real gladness and happiness and richness of joy of all the ages. How all things of life breathe in freshness and newness of vigor! The harshness and tension of work softens and relaxes. Hearts troubled and worried grow hopeful and face brightens. The display in shop windows and the decorations in stores and offices and homes and churches tell of real joy. The songs and the praises and the glad shouts speak of a new found pleasure, though old still ever coming again fresh and new and pleasure giving.

But with all of these expressions of joy many many will not experience the thrill of new fresh life and joy that comes with the time. O that they might have its blessing! Many are so broken and oppressed by hard-hearted, selfish, grinding greed that their sphere is so narrowed that signs of rejoicing can be but little more than mockery, save to those who know and possess the true riches which plunder can never reach and spoil. And O, so many with larger opportunities will miss the true joy because their rejoicing is only that of this carnal earthly life! The time brings a pleasure for that but not the deep abiding joy of which the season at its very best can speak but faintly.

And what is the seed and kernel of such a rich happiness? It is not all in the day of which the season speaks. Yes that day

was the birthday of Him to whom all the universe might well bow and give adoration and praise. It was the keynote of all the glad songs for the time, so glad in fact that the angels started the chorus that shall swell and ring and chant through all the ages. No it is not all in the birth of Jesus.

We were strangers to the promises of God. There was no hope for us and we were without God and still in the world. But the day of the coming of Christ tells of the blood in which we are made nigh to God and are given access in the Spirit to all the covenant and promise and hope and blessing of the Father. And builded up through the Spirit, for a dwelling place of God. Wonderful glory and privilege Jesus brought for the helpless! He just flung wide open the door to the riches of God and gave the fulness of the blessing and joy of the Father's Kingdom to us. His riches are unsearchable. Why not be happy?

But this is not all of the best of it. He lives now in the presence of God to do just as great things for us even after the wall is thrown down. He fully gives to us the privileges and protection of the Kingdom while we travel in this foreign clime and keeps it for all eternity. O Jesus, thou mighty King and High Priest of God let us know to what thou hast called us and what privileges thou hast secured for us.

How can any condition keep us from being glad in him! Let us be glad all the days of our lives.

Glenford, Ohio.

THE BRETHREN CHURCH—AN ORGANIZATION FOR SPECIAL WORK.

J. D. M'FADEN.

The Brethren Church is an organization for work. In the Providence of God she has come up through great tribulation. The faith delivered to the saints is in her keeping, and as a special organization she has a work to do that no other organization can do. She occupies a close and unique relation to Tunkerism on one hand, and to the denominations and the world on the other hand.

Her organization should be kept intact. To do this, her members must be true to her principles and faithful in her defense and earnest in advancing her cause. Many are doing this. Sacrifices undreamed of by some are being made, and burdens carried that are hard to bear.

But the church is in her formative period. None understand this better than some of the denominations, and they are taking advantage of the situation and making every effort to capture our members and destroy our organization. The

Seventh Day Advents are earnest in this work, but they are open and above board. They go into a community and preach their doctrine; you can oppose it and settle the matter.

Not so with the Christian Alliance. They enter churches under certain pretensions, take their money, get their men, sap its vitality. The Christian Alliance is an organization equipped for work, having its doctrines and methods. Now if the Alliance is to do our work, why have an organization? Disband at once and go with them. But having our special work it is our business, it is our bounden duty, to keep the organization intact. We are under obligations to God and humanity so to do.

One way to keep our organization is to sustain her institutions, and with that end in view I have opposed the organization of another mission board with a tendency to the Christian Alliance position. Should we allow the organization of another college, with a wrong tendency, when our own is on the eve of success? Should we organize another Publishing House when our own is so crippled? Why then organize another board? It should not be done. I do not believe any man, or set of men, should organize any society in the interval of Conference under such conditions.

This is not a personal matter with me. It is a matter concerning the church at large, her health, her strength, her institutions and her special object. The General Board is her child, and as secretary of that board, it is my duty to expose any work that may sap her vitality.

We have organizations sufficient. Keep on organizing new societies and the church will become weighted down with them. Sustain the organizations we have and develop them and we will grow like the green bay tree. Pay for the College, open her doors to students, educate our boys and girls and keep them after they are educated. Let other churches do their work, we will run our own. Sustain the Publishing House and scatter the EVANGELIST. Let the Mission Board attend to the mission work. If they do not do their work let Conference put others in their place. Let us be friendly with all, but remember that the Brethren Church is an organization for special work, and other churches are to keep their hands off.

A CHRISTMAS MEDITATION.

Christmas night. The wind without moans through the darkness up and down the world's black night of sin. To shut the door and then, alone with God, look up, is well. The star stands over Bethlehem. How bright! Its beam, a golden